

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**Kootenai County Waterways Advisory Board**  
**September 11, 2025**  
**Kootenai County Search & Rescue Building**  
**10865 N Ramsey Rd**  
**Hayden, Idaho 83835**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Doug Harris, Michael Pelissero, Gary Schmidt, Jeff Stagner, Don Warner

**STAFF PRESENT:** Director Nick Snyder, Kootenai County Parks & Waterways; Sergeant Ryan Miller, Deputy Mohawk, Deputy O'Neill, Kootenai County Sheriff's Office; Ranell Schwartz, Recording Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:** none

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. Advisory Board members declared no conflicts of interest.

**MOTION: Michael Pelissero moved to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2025, meeting. The motion was seconded; all were in favor; the motion carried.**

***NEW BUSINESS***

**A. PROPOSED UNATTENDED VESSEL ORDINANCE**

Director Nick Snyder stated that he and Sergeant Ryan Miller have discussed the need for a county ordinance regarding unattended and abandoned vessels. They would like to get ahead of it and propose an ordinance to prevent future problems with anchored boats on the waterways. Director Snyder presented Valley County's current ordinance regarding *Live Aboard* activities. He also included the Federal Regulations that would be enforceable if our county waterways are *navigable waterways*. Sergeant Miller stated that he has been discussing this issue with the County Commissioners for the last five years to let them know the need for an ordinance was coming. People are already doing it, and nothing prevents it currently. Abandoned boats are already in ordinance but before abandoned boats can be removed, the funding issue needs to be resolved. They propose that the cost be split between the Sheriff Vessel Account, Parks & Waterways Vessel Account and the General Fund (taxes). They do not have any current contracts for vessel towing. \$300/hour is the cheapest. There are contractors who are interested but no one has come forward with a proposed contract.

**MOTION: Michael Pelissero moved to look into this issue a little bit deeper, bring it up again, and once we have something, give it to Nick to present to the Commissioners. The motion was seconded.**

There was discussion. Director Snyder will send the board members proposed ordinance language in advance of the next meeting in December.

**A vote was taken; all were in favor; the motion carried.**

***OLD BUSINESS***

NONE

***STAFF REPORTS***

**Sergeant Ryan Miller,** from the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office stated that the season was almost over. All of the seasonal employees are gone. They had hiring challenges. They are raising wages, but PERSI requirements have changed, and seasonal employees can only work for five months before they are required to pay into PERSI. Numbers were lower this season across the board. There were no fatalities or major issues. They were able to purchase equipment with the funding from salary savings.

**Director Nick Snyder**, from the Parks & Waterways Department, stated that he will present the year-end stats at the next meeting. It was an uneventful summer. Water is extremely low currently. Upcoming projects include the Upper Twin fixed pier, and the Mica Bay Boat Launch concrete replacement. Director Snyder will present a WIF Grant for Carlin Bay Docks in December. The department has received a new grooming machine for the Snow Groomer program. Low snow levels for the past two years have resulted in low funding for the program. A new dock was installed at the Bayview Boat Launch. The County Commissioners have given notice to Lakes Highway District that they are terminating the lease. Director Snyder met with Lakes Highway District to discuss management ideas. The lease also includes Maiden Rock Boat Launch on Spirit Lake, and Lower Twin Boat Launch. The Boathouse project is in the design and engineering phase. There are lots of moving parts. The permit is done, and he hopes the project will be out for bid in November. The Commissioners approved the addition of a full-time employee in the FY26 budget. It is the first additional employee for the department in eighteen years.

**FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

PROPOSED UNATTENDED VESSEL ORDINANCE

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rarell Schwartz*

Recording Secretary

## UNATTENDED OR LIVE ABOARD VESSELS

### VALLEY COUNTY, ID ORDINANCE

Live Aboard:

a. It shall be illegal to use a vessel for live aboard activities on Valley County waterways unless that vessel is equipped with a holding tank for human waste.

b. It shall be illegal to use any vessel for such live aboard activities for longer than fifteen (15) days in any thirty (30) day period.

4. Unattended Vessel: It shall be illegal to leave a vessel unattended for more than three (3) continuous days on any Valley County waterway while anchored to the bottom or moored to any structure not permitted by the State of Idaho Department of Lands or by another federal, state or local permitting authority. Moving the vessel or breaking the unattended time by being onboard does not remedy the illegality if a reasonable person would determine that the vessel is not being used and is being left unattended for more than three (3) days.

5. Houseboat Anchoring: Houseboats, when overnighting on any Valley County waterway, must tie up to a structure permitted for such use by the State of Idaho Department of Lands or by another federal, state or local permitting authority; and must have written permission from such authority to do so. In no case shall an overnighting houseboat anchor to the bottom.

### Federal regulations

The U.S. Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers manage federal regulations, primarily focusing on hazards to navigation and pollution on **navigable waterways**.

- Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removal Act of 2024: This federal law makes it illegal to abandon a vessel on navigable waters. It empowers the Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers to remove abandoned vessels and hold owners liable for removal costs and penalties up to \$500.
- Definition of abandonment: The federal law defines a vessel as "abandoned" if it is left unattended on navigable waters for more than 45 days, after the owner has been notified.
- Notification: The Coast Guard will attempt to notify the owner before determining a vessel is abandoned. If the owner cannot be identified, the notice is made public through local publications and the Coast Guard's website.